II besides in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and what steps Government propose to take to strengthen the tourist infrastructure at such centres-

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) Based on the recommendations of the 1st Task Force, which had a representative from Archaeological Survey of India, a project to develop places of Buddhist importance in the States of U.P. and Bihar is being executed with the assistance of Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan.

(b) Under this project wayside facilities have been sanctioned at Doherighat and Gazipur in U.P. and a wayside facility at Hiswa in Bihar is proposed.

(c) Reimbursement claims amounting to Rs. 14.32 crores have been sent to Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan which are under consideration.

(d) The Second Task Force identified 53 Buddhist Centres in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, J&K., Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim and Tamil Nadu for phased development. Central Department of Tourism would consider extending assistance to the concerned State Governments. On receipt of specific proposals and dependent upon their merits, availability of funds and *inter-se* priority.

Incentives for development of Equipments based on Solar Energy

995. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that over 100 million families are presently using firewood in rural households, which represents a major share of energy used in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what incentives Government are giving for R & D efforts for development of equipments based on solar energy and also what fiscal incentives are being offered for commercial production of such equipment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) and (b) It is estimated that around 150 million households in rural areas will be using fire wood in the year 2000 for cooking and heating applications.

(c) R and D efforts for development of equipments based on solar energy are being carried out by various institutes, universities, laboratories etc. Financial support is provided by the Government for taking up R & D activities.

Fiscal incentives, like 100 per cent rate of depreciation under the Income Tax Act, exemption from Industrial Licensing, relief in Customs duty, exemption from Central excise are available to the manufacturers for commercial production of solar equipments. Sales Tax exemption reduction has also been allowed on solar energy equipments devices by some of the manufacturers.

Some of the solar thermal equipments|devices are provided to the consumers under cost sharing (subsidy) scheme by the Government.

Appointment of Inquiry Commission on working of Coal India Limited

996. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether several associations, organisations and individuals have urged the Central Government to